



## American toad

*Bufo americanus*

Kingdom: Animalia  
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates  
Class: Amphibia  
Order: Anura  
Family: Bufonidae

### Features

The American toad is about two to 3 1/2 inches long. The body color may be brown, olive, or brick red. There are dark spots on the belly. The dark spots on the back each include one or two warts or bumps. It has long parotoid glands (seen as lumps under the skin) on the upper back separated from the ridge behind the eye or connected to it by a short spur.

### Natural History

The American toad lives anywhere it has access to shallow bodies of water for breeding, moist hiding places, and plenty of food, such as in gardens, lawns, woods, or fields. It hides in shrubbery or soil during the day and is active at night. It eats insects and worms. It breeds in spring. The male calls with a high musical trill. The female may lay several thousand (2,000 to 20,000) eggs in long strings that may extend for several feet along the bottom of a pond or ditch. Hatching occurs one week later with

metamorphosis (change to land-based "toadlet") in early June. In southeastern Iowa, the American toad tends to be replaced by the Fowler's toad and is rare in the western tiers of counties.

### Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; wet prairies and fens; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs; temporary water supplies; bottomland forests

### Iowa Status

common; native

### Iowa Range

statewide

### Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.